

Seeing with the Heart's Ear

*A vision-shifting workshop focused on finding and making images
that resonate with our reflective and feeling life.*



Martin Steingesser

"In order to become a doer and a maker, it is necessary first
that the mind's attention be entrapped and enthralled by what already exists."

—*Mary Oliver*

"Oh, the detail, the sacred detail."

—*Vladimir Nabokov*

"The forms we perceive through our senses bespeak invisible agencies. . . .
As we grow quiet, our love rises."

—*M.C. Richards*

Poetry is a label on an activity we will certainly be doing; but what I hope is to inspire and provide sufficient opportunity for participants to be more aware, more conscious, while providing new tools, or new ways to use old ones, to serve that consciousness in expressive ways. In our workshops, we will be looking for how wind soughing among spruce and hemlock, lap of waves, the migrating geese, conversation at dinner and weather ruffle the heart's fur, reflect and carry our stories.

Beginning with attention to experience and the senses for creating word images, writing strategies introduced include imaging, montage, simile and metaphor, associative thinking, repetition and variation, color and simplicity of style. Engaging, accessible poems are used to model strategies and for inspiration. And participants are encouraged to explore voice in their writing and the pleasures of speaking and hearing poems.

Eminently useable strategies are offered for dancing with non-writing time and starting new work.

Fishing

Sometimes words come hard—they resist me
till I pluck them from deep water like hooked fish. . .

~*Lu Ji* (261-303)

You have to be willing
to wait days and days with nothing
biting.
Wait
while the far leaves, the sky change
blues and greens, and birdcalls,
wind, river become the sound of thinking.
This line you cast
reaches into different music.
A murmur flutters over the water—
be more still. . .
Sometimes a moment happens
when what moves
doesn't, when the trees and grasses
along the riverbank seem to hold their breath,
and it is the stones that breathe. . .
The fish you want
is rising in another world.

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The Workshops move through a progression of literary disciplines and concerns, among them:

- a summons to stillness and attention, to center and note the way we experience;
- attention of inner voices, often more easily accessed when attending to the outer experience;
- discovering relationships among experiences;
- and the way experience is nested within, how we are responsible for the choices we make, what we create, who we become.

bio

“**Martin Steingesser’s** poems articulate the many seasons of the heart—joy, outrage, longing, whimsy, sadness,” said former Maine Poet Laureate Baron Wormser. “A burning, tender voice that rejoices in the ungainly splendors of human feeling.” He has published two books of poems, *Brothers of Morning* and *The Thinking Heart: The Life and Loves of ETTY Hillesum*, the latter versions based on Hillesum’s journal and letters.

Named the first Poet Laureate of Portland, Maine 2007-09, his poems have won a number of awards, including the Betsy Sholl Award 2013. He has been teaching poetry workshops for 35 years and was given the Maine Alliance for Arts Education’s Bill Bonyun Award 2006 for “exemplified talent and professionalism as an artist and contributions to arts education.”

A performance poet, he has performed for diverse audiences, from the Poetry and Jazz Festival in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to the State House at the Maine Capitol. “Writing and presenting poems is a way I touch and make present a sense of grace I want in my life,” he says. “There are moments performing poems when windows, doors, walls blow off, and I am in a warm, boundless space with whoever is listening.”

"His work is beauty, it moves you," says a 10-year-old student. "He brings you over the bridge to poetry."



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Martin Steingesser at “Painters, Players & Poets”
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“A poem in the air is not the same poem as it was on the page—the drama and charm of its unfolding is completely, particularly alive and intimate as it passes from one body into another.”
Tony Hoagland